

# **Cedar River Instream Flow Commission**

## ***Final Minutes***

### **SPU Water Quality Lab**

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012

#### **Organizations/Members Present:**

- Seattle Public Utilities -- Tom Fox, Rand Little, Karl Burton
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers -- Lynne Melder
  - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife -- Peggy Miller
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service -- Tim Romanski
  - NOAA Fisheries --Randy McIntosh
  - Muckleshoot Indian Tribe --Holly Coccoli
  - Washington Department of Ecology --Buck Smith
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**I. Call to Order:** Tom called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM.

**II. Approval of Agenda:** Approved as presented.

**III. Approval of Draft Minutes:** Draft minutes from June's meeting were approved as presented and finalized.

**IV. News and Notes:** Tom handed out Seattle's Saving Water Partnership 2011 Annual Report. Rand distributed a letter from Jim Erkmann and Chris Konrad to the other members of the HCP Oversight Committee (Committee) outlining ideas for the Committee to address climate change in regard to reservoir and river operations, invasive organisms and forest sustainability. Attached to the letter was a response letter from Cyndy Holtz, acting in her role as SPU's representative to and chair of the Committee. Holly provided a brief review of recent activities involving vegetation removal on the flood wall in the Renton reach. The new colonel at ACOE is trying to get a variance of the national standards to allow some vegetation to remain. A recent study found roots in the far side of the existing floodwall. It isn't clear whether the variance will be granted. Lynne reported that the small locks repairs are complete and pontoons for the new 520 bridge will begin moving through the large locks soon.

**V. Real Time Water Management:**

***Hydrologic Conditions for Tolt and Cedar:*** Tom reported that the snowpack was completely melted in the upper watershed. The cumulative snowpack was

larger this year although last year's snowpack took longer to melt. The current Chester Morse Lake elevation is 1' lower than last year at this time (1561.7') and inflows are also lower than last year. Tom said that the objective was to keep the reservoir full as long as possible. As a result, we are well above typical historic reservoir elevations for late July. Typically, reservoir elevations are below 1560' by early July. The water returning from the moraine will help maintain flows below the dam late into the summer. Total precipitation for July is slightly below average. The 8-week moving average for inflows to the reservoir is well above the 50 percentile level although dropping in response to the warm weather and completion of snowmelt. Stream flows are well above minimum levels set when the IFC allocated the supplemental blocks of water in June. Starting August 4<sup>th</sup>, the City plans to provide voluntary summer supplementation that calls for minimum flows between 113 cfs and 118 cfs (30 to 35 cfs above actual summer minimums). The voluntary supplemental flow plan is a soft target that could change depending on moraine return, weather and conditions in Lake Youngs. SPU does not expect to use storage to meet these voluntary supplemental summer flows. Downramping requirements have been met successfully since the last IFC meeting. There was a flow spike resulting from a beaver dam break in the Rock Creek drainage which caused turbidity problems at Landsburg. Recent water consumption is slightly higher than last year based on the 7-day moving average and cumulative demand is also slightly higher than last year.

***Lake Washington:*** Lynne reported that the elevation of Lake Washington is currently at 21.6' and all 4 flumes are operating except during times when the Muckleshoot tribal biologists are capturing fish at the ladders for a tagging and tracking study.

***Fish Update:*** Holly reported that the current sockeye count (July 29<sup>th</sup>) is 142, 586 fish which is over 3 times the forecasted return. Fourteen percent of the Chinook run has gone through the locks with 1223 Chinook counted which is 88% of the 16 year average for this time in the return period. To date, Landsburg staff have seen one sockeye pass the dam. Karl reported that the vulnerable trout redd that required the most water for protection was observed in a dry condition on July 17<sup>th</sup>, and would probably not produce any fry.

***Weather:*** The short term forecast calls for temperatures in the 80s and dry over the weekend. The 90-day forecast predicts dryer than average conditions with normal temperatures. The long term forecast indicates El Nino conditions developing in the fall and winter months.

## **VI. Supplemental Studies**

***Peak Flow Adaptive Management Study:*** Rand mentioned that IFC comments on the USGS papers had been forwarded to Chris. Rand also passed out a revised schedule for the remaining papers and a proposed schedule for the

development and implementation of the habitat monitoring study. In addition, Rand passed out a list of tasks and key topics for the monitoring plan (Phase 2).

Rand asked the IFC to evaluate the listed key topics and make a list of the 4 most important topics for the next meeting.

Rand distributed a table showing the results from the accelerometers including placement depth and flow at which scour was initiated. The lowest flow at which scour was initiated was approximately 2250 cfs and the accelerometer was at 10 cm. Tom suggested that the accelerometer results indicated that the current scour threshold may be slightly lower than necessary and providing greater flexibility with a higher scour threshold may provide benefits and lower the risk of scour in subsequent events. The IFC discussed the idea of raising the scour threshold to 2200 cfs (USGS Renton gage). IFC members were supportive of a new threshold of 2200 cfs as long as there was further fieldwork to verify that this threshold would not scour areas that were not represented by the USGS data set. Setting accelerometers at shallower depths and in areas that are predicted to be more vulnerable to scour (i.e. small substrates, high gradient, around structure) were discussed as techniques to verify the USGS results. The IFC agreed to change the scour threshold to 2200 cfs with the plan to perform future monitoring that will address the hypothesis that scour does not initiate below 2200 cfs.

## **VII. September 5th IFC Meeting:**

- 1) Hydrologic updates and fall forecasts
- 2) Accretion Flow Study
- 3) USGS Peak Flow Study -- final products update.
- 4) Scoping of Peak Flow Adaptive Management, monitoring and research elements.

## **VIII. Meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM**